



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

## **NMFS Announces a Proposed Rule to Adjust Quotas, and Establish 2008 Fishing Seasons in the Large Coastal Shark, Small Coastal Shark, and Pelagic Shark Fisheries**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces proposed quotas and season opening and closing dates for the 2008 first trimester season quotas for large coastal sharks (LCS), small coastal sharks (SCS), and pelagic sharks based on over- or underharvests from the 2007 first trimester fishing season. Specifically, NMFS proposes to close the LCS fishery until Amendment 2 of the Consolidated HMS FMP becomes finalized and effective and allow some harvest of SCS and pelagic sharks in all regions (See Table 1). The LCS closure would remain effective until Amendment 2 to the HMS FMP is finalized and effective even if that date is after the start of the 2008 second trimester season (Table 2). If the draft Amendment 2 is finalized and effective after May 1, 2008, NMFS proposes a modification in regards to the SCS and pelagic shark fisheries which would allow these fisheries to open May 1, 2008 with baseline quotas.

During the first trimester season of 2007, the South Atlantic region landed 9.7 mt dw with no LCS quota available (-112.9 mt dw) and 27.6 mt dw (9 percent) of their SCS quota. The Gulf of Mexico region landed 187.4 mt dw (300 percent) of their LCS quota and 14.5 mt dw (96 percent) of their SCS quota. The North Atlantic region experienced underharvests for both LCS and SCS.

The preferred alternative seeks to address extensive overharvests in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regions in 2006 and 2007 and take into consideration the results of the recent stock assessments which have indicated that a number of shark stocks are overfished and experiencing overfishing.

NMFS will hold one Public Hearing on October 3, 2007, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., at 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

The comment period for this proposed rule is open until October 31, 2007. Written comments, identified by “0648-AV93”, may be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>, or sent by fax or mail to the contact information included below. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (e.g., name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

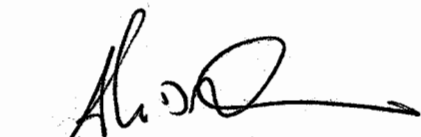
This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of Federal Register. For further information on this proposed rule and its requirements, contact LeAnn S. Hogan or Karyl Brewster-Geisz at 301-713-2347. Copies of the proposed rule and draft Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility



Analyses are available upon request from the Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: 301-713-2347, fax: 301-713-1917). The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.

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Alan D. Risenhoover  
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

**SEP 26 2007**

Date

Table 1. Proposed season lengths and quotas for the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester season of 2008

| Species Group   | Region                  | Opening Dates   | Closing Dates                    | Available Quotas               |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Large Coastal Sharks—<br>i.e., sandbar, silky,<br>tiger, blacktip, spinner,<br>bull, lemon, nurse,<br>hammerheads | South Atlantic          | CLOSED          |                                  | 16.3 mt dw<br>(35,935 lb dw)   |
|   | Gulf of Mexico          | CLOSED          |                                  | 51.0 mt dw<br>(112,435 lb dw)  |
|   | North Atlantic          | CLOSED          |                                  | 10.7 mt dw<br>(23,589 lb dw)   |
| Small Coastal Sharks—<br>i.e.,<br>Atlantic sharpnose,<br>finetooth, blacknose,<br>bonnethead                      | South Atlantic<br>(49%) | January 1, 2008 | To be determined<br>as necessary | 354.9 mt dw<br>(782,413 lb dw) |
|   | Gulf of Mexico<br>(48%) | January 1, 2008 | To be determined<br>as necessary | 73.2 mt dw<br>(161,377 lb dw)  |
|   | North Atlantic<br>(3%)  | January 1, 2008 | To be determined<br>as necessary | 19.3 mt dw<br>(42,549 lb dw)   |
| Blue sharks   | No regional quotas      | January 1, 2008 | To be determined<br>as necessary | 91.0 mt dw<br>(200,619 lb dw)  |
| Porbeagle sharks  |                         |                 |                                  | 30.7 mt dw<br>(67,681 lb dw)   |
| Pelagic sharks other<br>than blue or porbeagle  |                         |                 |                                  | 162.7 mt dw<br>(358,688 lb dw) |

Table 2. Proposed season lengths and quotas for the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester season of 2008

| Species Group   | Region                  | Opening Dates | Closing Dates                    | Available Quotas                |
|---|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Large Coastal Sharks—<br>i.e., sandbar, silky,<br>tiger, blacktip, spinner,<br>bull, lemon, nurse,<br>hammerheads | South Atlantic          | CLOSED        |                                  | To be determined                |
|   | Gulf of Mexico          | CLOSED        |                                  | To be determined                |
|   | North Atlantic          | CLOSED        |                                  | To be determined                |
| * Small Coastal<br>Sharks—i.e.,<br>Atlantic sharpnose,<br>finetooth, blacknose,<br>bonnethead                     | South Atlantic<br>(49%) | May 1, 2008   | To be determined<br>as necessary | 74.1 mt dw *<br>(163,361 lb dw) |
|   | Gulf of Mexico<br>(48%) | May 1, 2008   | To be determined<br>as necessary | 72.6 mt dw *<br>(160,054 lb dw) |
|   | North Atlantic<br>(3%)  | May 1, 2008   | To be determined<br>as necessary | 12.0 mt dw *<br>(26,455 lb dw)  |
| Blue sharks   | No regional quotas      | May 1, 2008   | To be determined<br>as necessary | 91.0 mt dw<br>(200,619 lb dw)   |
| Porbeagle sharks  |                         |               |                                  | 30.7 mt dw<br>(67,681 lb dw)    |
| Pelagic sharks other<br>than blue or porbeagle  |                         |               |                                  | 162.7 mt dw<br>(358,688 lb dw)  |

\* Please note that for SCS, the baseline quota for the 2<sup>nd</sup> season is presented.